

# **State of Vermont**

## **House of Representatives**



**Montpelier, Vermont**

### **Joint House Resolution**

**J.R.H. 4**

Joint resolution supporting release of the text of the Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade agreement, before the United States signs the agreement, and opposing the congressional granting of Trade Promotion Authority for the legislative consideration process

Offered by: Representatives Pearson of Burlington, Botzow of Pownal, Davis of Washington, Deen of Westminster, Donovan of Burlington, Hooper of Montpelier, Jewett of Ripton, Keenan of St. Albans City, Klein of East Montpelier, Macaig of Williston, Martin of Wolcott, McCormack of Burlington, McFaun of Barre Town, Partridge of Windham, Patt of Worcester, Poirier of Barre City, Stevens of Waterbury, Till of Jericho, Toleno of Brattleboro, Townsend of South Burlington, Walz of Barre City, Yantachka of Charlotte, and Zagar of Barnard

Whereas, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is a proposed free trade agreement among 12 nations: the United States, Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam, and

Whereas, the participating countries equal 38 percent of the total global economy, and

Whereas, in the middle of January 2015, U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman told members of Congress that the negotiations were on a “two-month trajectory,” and

Whereas, TPP involves international trade issues that could trigger the relocation of thousands of American jobs to nations with low wages and poor labor records, and result in serious long-term environmental consequences, and

Whereas, to date, most of the negotiated details of the TPP have been kept secret from the public and members of the participating countries’ national legislatures, and

Whereas, on February 11, 2014, senior members of the national legislatures of Australia, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, and Peru issued a joint letter requesting that the text of the TPP be released before the participating nations sign the document, and



Whereas, in the United States, there have been repeated congressional calls for greater transparency in the TPP negotiating process, including a June 27, 2012, letter 132 bipartisan members of Congress wrote to then U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk “to urge you and your staff to engage in broader and deeper consultations with members of the full range of committees of Congress whose jurisdiction touches on the wide-ranging issues involved,” and

Whereas, Congress has treated international trade agreements as congressional-executive agreements and not treaties, and therefore, a majority vote in both the House and the Senate is needed for U.S. ratification, and

Whereas, a central issue in the congressional deliberations is Trade Promotion Authority (TPA), also referred to as fast tracking, and

Whereas, were TPA in effect for congressional TPP deliberations, there would only be a single up or down vote in each legislative chamber with no opportunity for amendments or added legislative protocols to this extremely important multi-nation free trade agreement, and

Whereas, TPA statutory authority expired in 2007, and Congress would be required to enact new legislation for its application to the TPP’s legislative consideration process, and

Whereas, many organizations, including the Sierra Club, the AFL-CIO, the Communications Workers of America, the Citizens Trade Campaign, and Public Citizen, oppose the reauthorization of TPA, and

Whereas, it is imperative that Congress and the American people are afforded the maximum opportunity to review carefully the anticipated complex TPP document, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly urges the President and the U.S. Trade Representative to release a text of the proposed TPP prior to the United States signing the agreement, and be it further

Resolved: That the General Assembly urges Congress not to adopt TPA as part of its consideration of the TPP, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to President Barack Obama, to U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman, and to the Vermont Congressional Delegation.